PRĪTI SINHĀ

SANSKRIT *STOTRA*-TRADITION, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE *STOTRA-S* OF RĀMABHADRA DĪKṢITA

The term '*Stotra*' standing for benediction, eulogisation may be derived from the Sanskrit root '*stu*' with the suffix '*ṣṭrun*'. Thus the term signifies the sentiments of a devotee for an object of his worship, respect, etc. In fact it is a composition conveying expressions of a devotee for an object of worship or respect. A hymn (*Stotra*) and devotion (*bhakti*) are inter-related inasmuch as a hymn cannot be written or sung without devotion or attachment towards somebody, specially an object of respect or worship. A hymn is thus an expression of one's devotion to someone.

The *Stotra*-tradition in Sanskrit may be traced back to the hoary past. The hymns of the *Ṛgveda* fall under this category. Here the seers have eulogized the gods according to their own faith and feelings. Some seers have praised the gods for their valour, some for their beauty, some for their munificence and so on. Here the seers praised the gods for getting from them various favours such as longevity, prosperity, happiness, etc. in this world and the world hereafter. Actually the hymns of the *Ṛgveda* may be called the oldest. A seer praises a deity asking for his favour in various forms. The very opening hymn of the *Ṛgveda* is a prayer to the fire god where the seer eulogizes him in various forms such as a priest, a deity of a sacrifice, a sacrificer and sustainer of the wealth. [1]

1. *Agnimīḍe puro'hitam yajñasya devam ṛtvijam* | *Hotāraṁ ratna'dhātamam* || *Ṛgveda*, 1.1.1.

The hymns of the *Ṛgveda* convey variety of feelings. Sometimes it contains praise, or the feats of a particular god. [2] Sometimes it is used to curse some one, such as a verse (*mantra*), curses the seer himself in case he behaves like a devil. [3] In another verse (*mantra*) the seer curses himself with immediate separation from his offsprings in case he does something unworthy of himself. [4] On some occasions there is just a statement of facts, such as a verse of the *Ṛgveda* asserts that at a certain time there was neither mortality nor immortality. [5] On certain occasions the seer expresses his inability to recognize correctly his own self when he laments that he does not know whether he is this or that. [6] Some secular ideas are also conveyed in the *Ṛgvedic* hymns and they may be said to be the source of the pithy sayings, such as one who takes food alone earns nothing but sin. [7]

Later *Saṁhitā*-s also contain similar ideas. Though purely ritualistic, the *Brāhmaṇa*-s also contain praises of gods, demons, human beings, etc.

The *Upaniṣad*-s such as *Śvetāśvatara* also contain such verses. An Upaniṣadic verse is said to contain the germs of *Bhakti* in Sanskrit when it declares that one who is equally devoted to God as well as to his preceptor possesses the true knowledge of the *Upaniṣad*-s

Yasya deve parā bhaktiḥ yathā deve tathā gurau |
Tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ || [8]

The *Bhakti Yoga* has been explained in detail in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* which is a part of the *Mahābhārata*. It is in the form of a conversation between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. Here Kṛṣṇa has emphsized upon the concept of duty in relation to everyone.

Mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat kiñcidasti Dhanañjaya |

2. *Indrasya nu vīryāṇi pravocam* | *Ibid.*,1.32.1.
3. *Adyā murīya yadi yātudhāno'sm*i | *Ibid.*, 7.104.14.
4. *Adyā sa vīrair daśabhir viyūyāḥ* | *Ibid.*, 7.104.15.
5. *Na mṛtyurāsīdamṛtam na tarhi* | *Ibid.*,10.129.2.
6. *Na vi jānāmi yadi vedasmi* | *Ibid.*,1.134.37.
7. *Kevalāgho bhavati kevalādī* | *Ibid.*, 10.117.6.
8. *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*, 6.23.

Mayi sarvamidaṁ protaṁ sātre maṇigaṇā iva ||
Māṁ ca yo'vyabhicāreṇa bhaktiyogena sevate |
Sa guṇān samatītyāitān brahmabhūyāya kalpate || [9]

After the *Bhagavadgītā* come the *Purāṇa*-s. Most of them contain beautiful and melodious *Stotra*-s connected with various gods. So much so that Vyāsa claims that *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* is a fruit of the devotion (*Bhakti*) filled with nectar.

Nigamakalpataror galitaṁ phalaṁ
Śukamukhād amṛtadravasaṁyutam |
Pibata bhāgavataṁ rasamālayaṁ
Muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvakāḥ || [10]

In the sequence of the *Stotra Kāvya*-s come propounders of different schools of Indian philosophy, such as Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Vallabha, Mādhava, Rāmānanda, Caitanya, etc. They have eulogised God according to their own philosophy and faith. The followers of these different schools have also propounded their own philosophy and have sung songs in different languages to praise Him according to their faith and belief.

From the literary point of view and from the point of view of their number and importance these *Stotra*-s like *Mahākāvya*-s and *Laghukāvya*-s, may be put in a separate category. Notwithstanding different tastes, temperaments and faiths, the followers of different schools have contributed a lot to the Sanskrit literary tradition. Going through the variety of the *Stotra*-s it becomes evident that they have been composed in different styles. The speciality of these *Stotra*-s may be seen in their style, the faith and the object of their description. Hence, it is a bit difficult to classify various *Stotra*-s under various heads. Yet an attempt is being made to put them under different categories according to their style, language, etc.

In fact these hymns (*Stotra*-s) are the emotions of various singers and poets who have immense faith in the object of their worship and feel pleasure in describing the object of their devotion with all their love and fantasy.

Not taking into account the various faiths and forms in which the Supreme One appeared on the earth these hymns (*Stotra*-s) may be put

9. a. *Śrimadbhagavadgīta*, 7.7. b. *Ibid.*, 14.26.
10. *Śrimadbhāgavatpurāṇa*,1.1.3.

broadly under the following eight forms.

1. There are hymns which have been categorized and named after particular gods to whom they try to glorify, such as *Ādityastotra*, *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, *Umāsahasram*, *Durgāstotra*, etc. Some of these *Stotra*-s have been composed independently, such as *Lakṣmīsahasram* by Vyaṅkaṭādhvari, *Umāsahasram* by Vaśiṣta Gaṇapatimuni, etc. Others, though form parts of different *Purāṇa*-s, have been published separately under this category, such as the *Ādityahṛdaya* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Viṣṇusahasranāma* of the *Mahābhārata* and *Durgāsaptaśatī* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*.

2. There is another category of *Stotra*-s which describe and eulogise the exploits of a particular god and also follow the tradition of Sanskrit poetry.

3. Under another category of hymns (*Stotra*-s) may be placed those which are composed by a poet for his own welfare, longevity, prosperity, etc. *Navagrahastotra*, *Hayagrīvastotra*, *Sudarśanastotra* of Krūra Nārāyaṇa composed for one's welfare or for warding off some calamity, etc.

4. Some *Stotra*-s are related to various *mantra*-s and *tantra*-s which contain *Bījākṣara*-s, such as *Oṁ*, *Aiṅ*, *Hrīṅ*, *Klīṅ*, etc.

5. Some *Stotra*-s contain a particular refrain to produce melody in it. For an example may be named *Karāvalambanastotra*, *Viśvagarbhastotra*.

6. Some *Stotra*-s contain verses beginning with the alphabetic order such as *Varṇamālāstotra*. There are others which signify beliefs of a particular sect. For example the *Stotra*-s related to Śiva may begin with *Oṁ Śivāya Namaḥ*. There are others which contain the names of all the twenty seven stars of the constellation.

7. *Suprabhātam* is another variety of hymns (*Stotra*-s) in which the deity is awakened with a set of verses such as *Veṅkaṭeśvara-suprabhātam*. Another variety of verses is that where a disciple expresses his respect for his teacher or preceptor. For an example may be taken *Gurutattvamālikā*, *Gurugītā*, etc.

Thus the *Stotra* literature on one hand represents a continuous type of poetry and on the other, it also throws light on the endless tradition of teachers and poets.

In this tradition of *Stotra*-s the prominent poet is Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita belonging to the Kauṇḍinya clan of the South. He was born in 1630 A.D. in

the village Kaṇḍaramāṇikya of District Thanjavour. His father, Yajñarāma Dīksita was a sacrificer of all the four *Veda*-s (*Caturvedayajvā*) and his mother was Subbalakṣmī. Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita was the eldest of the four issues of his parents. He had acquired knowledge under the three teachers. Of these Kṛṣṇānanda Sarasvatī was his teacher of the *Vedānta*, Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita taught him literature and Cokkanātha Dīkṣita imparted to him the knowledge of grammar. Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita was married to the daughter of Cokkanātha Dīkṣita. His patron was Shahaji, who was a nephew of Chatrapati Śivāji and the elder son of Veṅkāji, a Maratha ruler. He was a literary figure and he reigned between 1684 A.D. and 1711 A.D. Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita was an important councellor of this Shahaji. He composed in various styles living in Shahajipur (Tiruvisanallura). His literary writings are *Patañjali-Caritam*, a poem, *Jānakīpariṇayam*, a drama, and *Śṛṅgāratilakam*, a *Bhāṇa*. His work on poetics is *Śabdabhedanirūpaṇam*. And *Paribhāṣāvṛttivyākhyāna*, *Uṇādimaṇidīpikā* and *Śaddarśinīsiddhāntasaṅgraha* may be put under his grammatical works.

Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita was a staunch devotee of Rāma. He had devoted himself fully to glorify his *Ārādhya*.

In his 15 *Stotra kāvya*-s Ācārya Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita has described various organs and limbs of the body of Rāma, his exploits and his weapons. The following verse of *Rāmastavakarṇarasāyanam* amply proves his complete devotion to Rāma:

Maulau nidhehi mukuṭaṁ tyaja barhibarhaṁ
Bāṇaṁ gṛhāṇa dhanuṣā saha muñca veṇum |
Śākhāmṛgair vihara santyaja gopabālān
Rāmo yadādvaha bhava tvam athāśraye tvām || [11]

A study of the *Stotra*-s of Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita is aimed at here. These *Stotra*-s, besides being a good piece of poetry, exemplify his learning also. These *Stotra*-s amply prove his knowledge and staunch devotion to Lord Rāma.

A brief description of the *Stotra*-s of Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita is given hereunder.

---

11. *Rāmastavakarṇarasāyanam*, 1.62.

Rāmastavakarṇarasāyanam

It is a lyrical composition divided into three parts which have been named as *Prathamo Niṣyandaḥ*, *Dvitīyo Niṣyandaḥ*, *Paryāyokti-niṣyandaḥ*. The terms used in the name of the text and its chapters, for example *Rasāyana* and *Niṣyanda*, respectively signify the medicinal value of the text for treatment of the minds of the poets. [12]

Herein, besides describing various exploits of Rāma, Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita has also described many stories and anecdotes related to him.

Prathamo Niṣyandaḥ

The first *Niṣyanda* is the longest of all the *Niṣyanda*-s. It contains 167 verses composed in the meters, such as the *Puṣpitāgrā*, *Pṛthvī*, *Mālabhārinī*, *Mālinī* and *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*. In the first verse of this *Niṣyanda* the poet has described Rāma and his *mantra* as giving emancipation (*Mokṣa*) and he claims that this *mantra* was handed down to everyone by Lord Śaṅkara for the good of the human beings.

Diśatu sakuśalaṁ jite daśāsye vidhivihitastutiveditasvarūpaḥ|
Upadiśati śivo nṛṇām yadīyaḥ manumavimuktipure vimuktihetoḥ|| [13]

In the fourth verse of this very *Niṣyanda* the poet has described Sītā as *Prākṛti*, *Sarasvatī*, *Lakṣmī*, *Girijā* and *Jaganmātā*. According to the poet the worship of all these goddesses is essential for acquiring the power to compose poetry.

Prakṛtiriti Sarasvatīti Lakṣamīriti Girijeti Jaganmayīti vā yām|
Gadati munigaṇaḥ kavitvasiddhyai kathamapi tāṁ kalaye videha-kanyām|| [14]

12. *Raghuvaracaraṇāravindabhakticchalamakarandanirantarābhiṣiktāḥ* |
Vakulaparimalagiro madīyāḥ kavikulakarṇarasāyanāni santu || *Ibid.*,1.7.
13. *Diśatu sakuśalam jite daśāsye vidhivihitastutiveditasvarūpaḥ*|
Upadiśati śivo nṛṇām yadīyaṃ manumavimuktipure || *Ibid.*,1.1.
14. *Ibid.*,1.4.

The influence of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, *Srīmadbhāgavata*, etc. may clearly be seen in some of the verses of this *Niṣyanda*. A verse from the *Prathama Niṣyanda* reading as '*dattamasyābhayaṁ mayeti*' [15] echoes the following verse of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki:

Ānayainaṃ Hariśreṣṭha dattamasyābhayaṁ mayā| [16]

Dvitīyo Niṣyandaḥ

It contains 105 verses composed in various meters. Herein also the poet has depicted Rāma as Brahmā. In the seventy-fourth verse of this Section the poet has used a metaphor called complete metaphor (*Sāṅgarāpaka*) to say that as an archer has caught hold of a parrot living in its home in the form of the forest, so has Vālmīki captured Rāma propounded in Vedānta (*Upaniṣad*-s) and playing in the Kakutsa family. Now this same Rāma has been living in the heart-cage of Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita. [17]

In painting a pen portrait of the feats of Rāma, the poet says that Rāma has drawn his bow in such a manner as its cord has taken a circular shape and it is throwing the arrows to different directions. Thus fighting with the army of Khara, Rāma is showing his marvellous feats where the arms, heads and feet of the warriors are lying scattered in the battlefield. [18]

15. *Ibid.*,1.17.
16. *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇa*, 6.18.
17. *Vedāntavibhramavane vihitapracāraḥ kākusthyavaṁśamavatīrya kadāpi khelan* |
Vālmīkivaṅnikaravāgurayā gṛhīto hṛtpañjaraṁ vrajati kaścidayaṁ śuko me ||
Rāmastavakarṇarasāyana, 2.74.
18. *Cakrīkṛtya śarāsanaṁ dhaladhalākurvatsuvarṇañcalaṁ*
muñcandikṣu vidikṣu kañcanabhṛtaḥ puṅkhānupuṅkhāñ śarān |
Svāmi naḥ kharasenayā nikhilayā sākaṁ samīkakṣitau
Kṛttakṣiptabhujāśiraśca-raṇayā krūraṃ parikrīdate|| *Ibid.*, 2.31.

Paryāyoktiniṣyandaḥ

This *Niṣyanda* contains 111 verses wherein the poet has taken recourse to the figure of speech called *Paryāyokta* to show his devotion to Rāma. *Paryāyokta* is a figure of speech which states something in a manner quite different from suggestion.

Paryāyoktaṁ tu gamyasya vaco bhaṇyantarāśrayam| [19]

In this context the poet Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita has some times depicted a single incident of Rāma's life and on others he has described his several feats. For an example may be taken the following verse.

Kakṣāntarnigṛhītarākṣasapatervīrasya dorantaraṃ|
Sālānāmiva saptakaṁ kṛtavate Sāketabhartre namaḥ|| [20]

Here in a single verse the poet has suggested killing of Bāli by Rāma, felling of all the seven palm trees by Him and capturing Bāli's might, exhibited by his holding to Rāvaṇa under his arm. In this effort some times, while employing the figure of speech *Paryāyokta*, the poet has taken recourse to an abstruse imagery. For an example may be taken the following verse:

Śatrūñjetumarundhatīpatisamānodaryadattāyudhaḥ
Sāṣrūdyatsāramānanāndṛvacanaprāptārisenāśaniḥ |
Vīṇāvanmunitātagītavibhavaḥ śridevarābhīṣṭakṛt-
Trātuṁ māṃ ghaṭatāṁ ghatoṭkacapitṛvyopāttadūtyaḥ prabhuḥ || [21]

In this verse Agastya has been described as real brother of Arundhatī's husband. Śūrpaṇakhā has been depicted as sister-in-law (*Nanda*) of Sarmā. Brahmā has been described as the father of the sage Nārada playing *Vīṇā*. Similarly, Indra has been introduced as brother-in-law (husband's younger brother) of Lakṣmī and uncle of Ghaṭotkaca.

This is a poem in the form of an eulogy to Rāma, but the allusion to *Purāṇa*-s and the figure of speech based on them and the sugges-

19. *Kuvalayānanda*, 68, P.121.
20. *Rāmastavakarṇarasāyanam*, (*Paryāyoktiniṣyandaḥ*), 44.
21. *Ibid.*, 110.

tions contained herein produce a hindrance in the delineation of the sentiment of *Bhakti*.

Rāmāṣṭaprāsastava

This work is composed in the metre known as *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*. It contains 117 verses. The characteristics of this metre lies in the fact that there is a pause after twelfth and seventh letters. And this phenomenon is repeated in all the four lines of a verse. The important feature of this composition is that the poet has used the same letters in all the four lines and at regular intervals. For an example may be taken the following verse:

Kartā kañjabhavātmanā trijagatām bhartā mukundātmanā
Hartā yaśca harātmanāghamakhilaṁ smartā ca yasyojjhati।
Dhartāraṁ dhanuṣaḥ śaraiḥ saha tamādartāramārtānvayam
Sartāro'pyapathe śritā raghupatiṁ vartāmahe nirbhayāḥ॥ [22]

Here the second letter of every caesura is combination of '*rtā*'. However, this play on letters does in no way produce any hindrance in the reading or the delineation of a sentiment.

In this work Rāma has been described as discharging duties of all the three deities, viz. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, who are responsible respectively for creating, protecting and destroying the creation. This verse is called *Aṣṭaprāsa* on account of the fact that a single set of letters is placed eight times and at the same place. In the verse quoted above the set of letters '*rtā*' is used at second and fourteenth places in all the four *pāda*-s. While describing the life and feats of Rāma no attention has been paid to the sequence of the incidents.

Varṇamālāstotra

As the name suggests, Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita has described different incedents in Rāma's life in fifty one verses. Here all the verses

22. *Rāmāṣṭaprāsastava*, 88.

begin with an alphabet in the same sequence as it is found in the *Devanāgarī* script.

The poet himself has named this work as *Varṇamālāstava*, which means a hymn containing all the alphabets.

Itthaṃ mama stuvadamartyanigadyamāna-
Traiyantamantramukharīkṛtapādapīṭha।
Rājādhirāja kṛpayā raghuvīra varṇa
Mālāstavaṁ tvamavakarṇayituṁ prasīda॥ [23]

This *Stotra* is composed in the metre known as *Vasantatilakā*. Its contents appear to be a gloss of some important phrases of the *Upaniṣad*-s and the *Bhagavadgītā*. For an example its tenth verse echoes the ideas of the oft-quoted phrase '*Ekamevādvitīyam*' [24]

Ekaṁ bhavantamṛṣayo viduradvitīyaṁ
Jānāmi kārmukamahaṁ tu tava dvitīyam॥ [25]

Similarly, the following verse echoes the idea conveyed in the phrase '*Tattvamasi*' [26]

Tattvaṁpade padamasīti ca yāni deva
Teṣāṁ yadasmyabhilaṣannupalabdhumarthān॥ [27]

In the *Varṇamālāstotra* the poet has avoided the usage of '*lṛ*' and the Vedic '*ḷ*' has been invariably used as '*l*'. The poet has avoided the use of letter '*ṇa*, *ṇa*, *tha*' in the beginning of a word. Instead, it has been used as a second letter in a word, viz. '*Prāṅ*', '*Trāṇam*', '*Protham*'.

The poet has explained the significance of *Śrirāmacandrāya Namaḥ* or *Śrīrāmabhadrāya Namaḥ* in the following verse:

Bhadrāya me'stu tava rāghava bodhamudrā
Vidrāvayantyakhilamāntaramandhakāram।

23. *Varṇamālāstotra*, 51.
24. *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, 6.2.2.
25. *Varṇamālāstotra*, 10.
26. *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, 6.1.4.
27. *Varṇamālāstotra*, 31.

Mantrasya te paripunanti jagadyathā ṣaḍ-
Aṣṭākṣarāṇyapi tatheti vivṛṇvatīva || [28]

Here the poet wishes that the *Bodhamudrā* of Lord Rāma may bring welfare to His devotees.

Rāmacitrastava

As the name of this *Stotra* suggests, the poet in 108 verses has eulogised Lord Rāma using the figure of speech *Yamaka*. For an example may be taken the following verse:

Dāritamārīcoraḥ kuharo yudhi hatamāhīkumārīcoraḥ|
Prabhavatu kāyāhantāmatihataye me sa tādakāyā hantā|| [29]

May the Lord, who had rent asunder the chest of Mārica, who vanquished in the battlefield Rāvaṇa – the thief of the daughter of Mother Earth and who had killed Tāṭakā, destroy my ego.

In this work the poet has alluded to his ancestors and himself such as Nallā Dīkṣita (Verse no. 10), Yajñarāma (Verse no. 12) and Rāmabhadrapāda (Verse no. 13). The poet is apologetic for using *Yamaka* in his poem.

Yamakahatābhā grāvāsvādā jagadīśa ghoratābhāgrāvāḥ
Śrī Rāma kṣantuṁ gāstavocitaṁ māmikāḥ samakṣaṁ tuṅgāḥ|| [30]

In the concluding verse of this *Stotra* the poet has eulogised Lord Rāma as the parents of the Universe (*Jagatāṁ Mātāpitarau*) and this shows poet's strong faith in the *Rāmānanda* or *Śrī* sect:

Jagatāṁ mātāpitarau mama dhīrdaśamukhasumadhyamātāpitarau|
Adhyāsītārāmau munihṛdayaśukavrajasya sītārāmau|| [31]

---

28. *Ibid.*, 39.
29. *Rāmacitrastava*,17.
30. *Ibid.*,106.
31. *Ibid.*,108.

Rāmacāpastava

In 112 verses composed in the metre *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* the poet has eulogised Rāma's bow. In the tradition of the devotees, the virtues and weapons of the deity are also deified and they are praised as gods. The works of Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita such as *Rāmacāpastava*, *Rāmbāṇastava*, *Rāmtūṇīrastava* come under this category. The *Rāmatūṇīrastava* could not be traced as yet, but the other two works have been published. In these works Rāma has been characterised as a valorous hero who is responsible for bringing welfare to the universe. The characteristic feature of this *Stotra* is various ornamental usages. The allusion to various anecdotes is also one of its characteristic features.

Alliteration and its various forms have been used to describe the various activities of Rāma's bow. The following verse is particularly noteworthy, because here the poet has employed alliteration without using a labial letter.

Kālīyāṇakarālakaṇṭhaninadanyakkāralīlāsakha-
Jyākarṣastanitāttagandhacakitakrandaddiśādantini।
Garjannirjhariṇīśatarjandaśāniryachare dhīriyam
Sitākāntakarāntakelisadane kāṇḍāsane khelati।।[32]

Here the poet desires that may his intellect live in the hands of Rāma, the beloved of Sītā. The string of the bow, when drawn, produces a sound which surpasses the sound produced by the God of Death that is Yama and the twanging of the bow is so fierce that the elephants holding the ten directions start crying.

Rāmabāṇastava

In this work the poet has employed a comparatively longer metre known as Sragdharā. Here the poetic talent of the poet is more evident than in the *Rāmacāpastava*. Most of the verses here describe the omnipotence of Lord Rāma. Besides, it also eulogises Rāma's arrows

32. *Rāmacāpastava*, 34.

which are destroyers of various elements and bestowers of health on His devotees. As many of the verses of this work have described Rāma's weapons as destroyers of various ailments, it has also been designated as *Kavacastotra*:

Dhṛtvā dhṛtvārdayitvā jalanidhikuhare majjayāmāsa vegād-
Rogānasmākamuccāṭayatu sa javanaḥ sāyakastāḍakāreḥ|| [33]
Khaṇḍaṁ khaṇḍaṁ subāhorbhaṭakulamakarotkauśikasyāśramāntān
Kausalyāsambhavasyāśugamakhilarujāśāntaye cintaye tam|| [34]

According to Veṅkaṭakṛṣṇa Kavi, the disciple of Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita, the later composed this work at the behest of his preceptor Nilakaṇṭha Dīkṣita:

Yo rāmasya ca Nīlakaṇṭhamakhinā bāṇastavaṁ kāritaḥ | [35]

The poet Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita, who is fond of using *Vṛtyanuprāsa* has used *Citrālaṅkāra* many times in this work. For an example may be taken verse no. 107, which reads as under:

Sābhāvajñānasatrāpahatiniratabhillokarakṣāvilāsā
Sālāvikṣārakallolajaladhitanumagrāmasaktā sadāsā|
Sādāsaktā samagrā diśatu śubhamiṣustāmasaghnānirāsā
Sārānighnā samastāśarabhaṭanikaratrāsanajñāvabhāsā|| [36]

Apart from this, there are verses which either do not contain any labial letter at all [37] or all the labial letters [38]. The poet is fond of com-

33. *Rāmabāṇastava*, 13.
34. *Ibid.*, 25.
35. *Patañjalicarita (ṭīkā)*, preface verse, 4.
36. *Rāmabāṇastava*, 107.
37. *Yaścaṇḍījāniśailagrahaṇakṛtadhiyaḥ khanditendrānilāgner*
Laṅkānāthasya kaṇṭhānahaha kadalikākāndakartaṁ cakarta |
Harṣeṇāśeṣagītaṁ trijagati nitarāṁ dṛśyate yasya tejaḥ
Sa śreyastādakāreḥ karatalakalitaḥ sāyakaḥ sādhayennaḥ|| *Ibid.*,104.
38. *Bhāsvadbhānuprabhāvābhibhavapaturursvaprabhābhirvidhūnvan*
Sauvargopaplavaughodbhavamṛju sumanobhāvasuprāparūpaḥ |
Pāpavyālopamāyurvibhavamapi madhusvāduvāggumphamāviṣ
Kurvanprahveṣu bāṇo bhavatu śubhavaho'sau subāhudviṣo vaḥ|| *Ibid.*, 105.

posing some verses in which he has not used vowels like *a*, *e*, *o*, *ai*, *au*. For an example may be taken the following verse:

Sadyaḥ saṅghaṭṭaraṁhastrutitakharacamūcakracañcatkarīndra-
Skandhasrudvisragandhakṣatajatatavatīnahaḍiṇḍīrabuddhim ।
Kurvanpaśyajjanasya vyavadalitasitacchattramūrcchadrucībhiḥ
Pṛthvīputrīśapatrī vipadamanupadaṁ hantu nirviṇṇabandhuḥ ॥ [39]

Rāmaprasādastava

This work is composed in the metre known as *Śikhariṇī*. It contains 107 verses. Here the poet has prayed to the Lord to bestow His kindness on him. The word '*Prasāda*' has also been used as a synonym of His kindness (*kṛpā*).

Prasādo yaṣyeha dviṣadavarajenāpi sulabhaḥ
Prasannaścedrājyaśriyamapi tiraśce diśati yaḥ । [40]

Besides the phrases dedicated to Lord Rāma such as:

'Kṛpāvaśyaḥ kiṁ kiṁ na kalayati nātho 'nusaratām' [41].
'Prapannastvāmeva prabhumatha na cāsīdakuśalī'. [42]

There lines define and eulogise *Viśiṣṭādvaita* system of Indian philosophy. Here the poet has tried to enumerate all the six characteristic features of Rāma's character. These are *Anukūlyasya Saṅkalpaḥ*, *Prātikūlyasya Varjanam*, *Rakṣiṣyatīti Viśvāsaḥ*, *Goptṛtvavaraṇam*, *Ātmanikṣepaḥ* and *Kārpaṇyam*.

On several places this echoes the contents of the *mantra*-s of *Upaniṣad*-s, *Agastyasaṁhitā*, *Ādhyātma Rāmāyana* and *Brahmasūtra*. In this work Rāma has been described as the life of all the living beings. He is the *Parabrahmā*. He is in the form of Light and He is omnipotent. Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita asserts that Rāma, being in the form

39. *Ibid.*, 36.
40. *Rāmaprasādastava*, 1.
41. *Ibid.*, 7.
42. *Ibid.*, 27.

of effulgent Light, is the source of the Sun, the Moon, the *Stotra*-s, the lightning, the fire and all the visible world, because all these do not have power to illumine themselves.

Na caṇḍāṁśurbhāti tvayi na ca śaśī nāpyuḍugaṇo
na caitā hrādinyaḥ sphuratu ca kuto vāyamanalaḥ।
tameva tvāṁ bhāntaṁ sakalamanubhatīdamaniśaṁ
Vibhāti tvadbhāsā punaridamaśeṣaṃ raghupate।। [43]

The germs of Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita's imagery may be found in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* and *Śvetàśvataropaniṣad*:

Na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratārakam
Nemāvidyuto bhānti kuto'yamagniḥ ।
Tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṁ
Tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ vibhāti ।। [44]

Lord Rāma of Ācārya Dīkṣita is the same *Virāṭpuruṣa* from whom are born all the *varṇa*-s and who is possessed of a thousand eyes, the same number of heads and the equal number of feet. It is He who is responsible for creating the *Veda*-s.

Dvijā vaktrājjātāstava bhujabalaṁ kṣatrāmakhilaṁ
Viśastūrūdbhūtā raghutilaka śūdrāḥ padabhuvaḥ ।
Sahasrākṣastadvaddaśaśataśirāḥ paṅktiśatapāt-
Surāṇāṁ vedānāmapi janayitā cāsi puruṣaḥ ।। [45]

Its germs are found in the *Puruṣa Sūkta* of the *Ṛgveda*:

Brāhmaṇo'sya mukhamāsīd bāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtaḥ
Ūrū tadasya yadvaiśyah padbhyāṁ śūdro ajāyata ।। [46]
Sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣah sahasrapāt ।
sa bhūmiṁ viśvato vṛtyātyatiṣṭhaddaśāṅgulam।। [47]

43. *Ibid.*, 52.
44. *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, 2.2.15., *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*, 6.14.
45. *Rāmaprasādastava*, 58.
46. *Ṛgveda*, 10.90.12.
47. *Ibid.*, 10.90.1.

It appears that the *Rāmaprasādstava* is Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita's later work, because it delineates the sentiment of devotion (*bhakti*).

Viśvagarbhastava

Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita composed 125 verses in the metre known as *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* considering the ephemeral nature of the worldly things. The great *Ācārya* has advised to remain far from them. According to him, it is only Rāma's name which can give lasting happiness, peace and salvation to the human beings. Every verse ends with the same refrain which reads as '*Tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye Śrījānakījānaye*':

Nityā na kratavaḥ kṛtā na nitarāmarthāstathopārjitā
Bhuktā na pramadā yathocitarasaṁ kā nāma mokṣe spṛhā |
Ittham janma nirarthakaṁ pariṇamannetuṁ kathañcitphalaṁ
tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye śrījānakījānaye || [48]
Rāmetyuccaritavyamakṣarayugaṁ taccāpi bhaktyā sakṛt
Prāpyā tena vimuktireva yadi tajjānatyapi glāyasi |
Kiṁ vakṣye sukhamāssva devi rasane vaśyau mama staḥ karau
tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye śrījānakījānaye || [49]

In all the verses eulogising the Almighty, the poet has given a vivid description of the contemporary society, which is known for the ill acts of the greedy rulers [50] and mutual jealousy towards their kinsmen [51].

Besides, greed of the common folk and their wickedness has also been described in detail. [52] According to Ācārya Dīkṣita, by worship-

---

48. *Viśvagarbhastotra*, 112.
49. *Ibid.*, 106.
50. *Vidhyuktena pathā kathāpi na nṛṇāṁ vittārjanasyādhunā*
Yadviprā api dharmāmargavimukhā naivācarantyāśramān |
Rājānaśca dhanepsavo' stavidhayastyaktuṁ tadarthaiṣaṇāṁ
Tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye śrījānakījānaye|| *Ibid.*, 119.
51. *Paryākṛṣya parastriyāh paradhanādapyaṅtaraṅgaṁ calaṁ*
Pāruṣyādvinivṛtya vācamanṛtādanyāpavādādapi |
Dhyātum stotumalaṁ bhavanti katiciddbhūmāvahaṁ kevalaṁ
Tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye śrījānakījānaye || *Ibid.*, 33.
52. *Iṣṭam vāryavitīrya ghāsakabalāniṣṭānadattvā dṛḍhaṁ*
Rajjvābadhya śirodharāṁ ca nikilaṁ dugdhvā payaścāṣatām |

ping the lotus feet of Lord Rāma there are born noble ideas in the minds of his devotees by the grace of the Almighty and they devote themselves to the welfare of the people. [53]

Svāmin rāma jagatpate nirupama trayyantavedya prabho
Tvatprītiṁ kurutāmayaṁ viracito me viśvagarbhastavaḥ |
Etena stuvatāṁ nṛṇāmabhimataṁ dehīti yācannahaṁ
Tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye śrījānakījānaye || [54]

Thus, Ācārya Dīkṣita has described his *Stotra Kāvya* as *Viśvagarbhastava*, whereas in the *Kāvyamālā* edition (1900) another heading e.g. *Jānakījānistotra* is given.

Ācāryastavarājabhūṣaṇa

Ācāryastavarājabhūṣaṇa is a panagery dominant with devotion (*Bhakti*). It contains 126 verses in the metre, *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*. Herein the poet has eulogised the work named as *Ācāryastavarāja* composed by his fellow student Brahmānanda. This poem is an expression of his disciple towards Ācārya Kṛṣṇānanda Sarasvatī. This Ācārya Kṛṣṇānanda Sarasvatī is known as Bālakṛṣṇa Bhagavatpāda in Tiruvisanullur (Shahajipuram). He has composed an advaitic text entitled *Siddhāntasiddhāñjana*. It appears from this *Stotra* that Ācārya Dīkṣita has accepted the devotion towards one's teacher as an important means for attaining God. Besides, he has always expressed his respect towards the Vedāntic teacher Kṛṣṇānanda Sarasvatī. He has given more importance to the *Ācāryastavarāja* than the works of Patañjali, Śabarasvāmi, Pakṣila and Śaṅkara.

Na vyālendravacaḥkrāmair na śabarasvāmiprabandhoktibhir
Nālāpairapi Pakṣilasya na girāmapyaṅkuraiḥ Śāṅkaraiḥ |

Yo doṣo'sti gavāṁ nṛṇāmiti sa na bhavedasmākamityutsukas |
Yasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye śrījānakījānaye || *Ibid.*, 90.

53. *Vāpīkūpataḍāgakarmaṇi tathaivāropaṇe bhūruhām* |
Andhogovasuvāsasāṁ vitaraṇe yajñakratūnāṁ vidhau |
Martyānāṁ hṛdayaṁ pravartayati yatpādābjasaṁsevanaṁ
Tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye śrījanakījānaye || *Ibid.*, 96.

54. *Ibid.*,122.

Ullāso viduṣāmudaṅcati tathā śālāntare yajvanām
Ācāryarājastavarāja puṣpamṛdulaiḥ ślokairyathā tāvakaiḥ|| [55]

Emphasising upon the importance of *Ācāryastavarāja* the poet remarks that this *Stotra* is more efficacious for granting of wealth, heaven or *Kaivalya*.

Ajñāḥ kecidupāsate kunṛpatīnatyantamarthecchayā
Svargārohaṇatṛṣṇayā katipaye karmāṇi nirmānti ca|
Kaivalyaspṛhayā ca yānti katiciddūreṇa vārāṇasīm-
Ācāryastāvarāja sannidadhati tvayyapyaśeṣārthade || [56]

It is evident by one verse that this work became popular during the time of Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita himself. [57] The refrain contained in the *Stotra* amply proves its musical quality. The attachment of the poet himself towards this hymn has touched its zenith in this verse. It has been claimed by the poet that the *Stotra* has surpassed the compositions of Bāṇa, Bhāsa, Mayūra, Hari (Bhartṛhari), Harṣa, Caura (Billahaṇa).

Kṣiptvā bāṇamudāraśabdaracanaṁ bhūyo guṇākarṣaṇāt
Trāsaṁ bhāsamayūrayorjanayatā dūre hariṁ dhūnvatā |
Ācāryastavarāja tatrabhavatā harṣasmayacchedinā
Coro'jīyata cātukārakavane cedetadarhaṁ tava || [58]

Some of the verses of the *Stotra* appear to be out of context.

These are found in Ācārya Dīkṣita's other *Stotra*-s which are preserved in Sarasvati Mahal Library, Tanjore. These are *Gāyatri Rāmāyaṇa*, *Añjali Rāmāyaṇa* I, *Añjali Rāmāyaṇa* II, *Sītāpatistava*, *Rāmāyaṇasaṅgrahah* and *Śrīrāmāyaṇastotra*.

---

55. *Ācāryastavarājabhūṣaṇam*, 65.
56. *Ibid.*, 83.
57. *Antarveśmasū catvareṣu valabhīmūleṣu rathyāsu ca*
Krīḍākāna-namaṇḍapeṣu ca nadīrodheṣu kuñjeṣu ca |
Grāme vā nagare'pi vā kimaparaṁ sarvatra dṛṣto bhavān |
Ācāryastavārāja darśayasi kiṁ tadvaibhavaṁ yadguroḥ || *Ibid.*, 61.
58. *Ibid.*, 11.

Gāyatrī Rāmāyaṇa

This work in 28 verses composed in *Anuṣṭup* metre is an abridgement of the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The beauty of this *Stotra* lies in the fact that the first letter of every verse is related to the first letter of the *Gāyatrī mantra*. Thus the first verse begins with letter '*O*' of the opening word '*Oṁ*' of the *Gāyatrī mantra* and ends with '*Ya*' occuring as the last consonant in the concluding word of the *mantra* '*Pracodayāt*'.

Oṁkurvannarthatāṁ dhātuḥ paramātmā jagatpatiḥ ।
Ayodhyādhīśaputro'bhūdduṣṭarakṣaḥprāśantaye ।। [59]
Yaṁ yamiṣṭamabhiddhyāya ye paṭhantīdamanvaham ।
teṣāmabhimataṁ kuryāt śrīrāmaḥ prītamānasaḥ ।। [60]

This manuscript does not contain any colophon.

Añjali Rāmāyaṇa I

Herein the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been described in 14 verses composed in *Śardūlavikrīḍita* metre. Like the *Viśvagarbhastotra*, the fourth *pāda* of every verse of this work ends with '*Tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye Śrījānakījānaye*'. The *Stotra* ends with the following verse:

Svāmin rāma kṛpānidhe pratidinaṁ tvāṁ kīrtayantaṁ muhuḥ
Trāṇārthaṁ kṛpaṇaṁ tvadekaśaraṇaṁ prāṇe prayāṇonmukhe ।
dattvā te smaraṇaṁ bhavopaśamanaṁ kāryaṁ mametyarthayan
Tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye śrījānakījānaye ।। [61]

'*Kṛpaṇam*' and '*Tvadekaśaraṇam*' words of this verse are suggestive of the humility and self-denial of the poet. The word '*Añjali*' used in *Praṇāmāñjali* suggests *Vandana*, one of the nine-fold devotions known as *Navadhā Bhakti*. It does not contain any colophon.

---

59. *Gāyatrī Rāmāyaṇa,* 1.
60. *Ibid.*, 28.
61. *Añjalirāmāyaṇa* part 1, 14.

Añjali Rāmāyaṇa II

According to the metre and the subject matter, this work is similar to the previous work (*Añjali Rāmāyaṇa* I). It contains 114 verses. It is more similar in contents to the *Viśvagarbhastotra*. Thus it appears that this *Stotra* has been composed on the basis of the *Viśvagarbhastotra*.

Svāmin rāma jagadvibho bahutaraṁ tvāṁ cintayannaham
Natvā tvāṁ manasā mayā viracitā rāmāyaṇaprāñjaliḥ|
Etena stuvatāṁ nṛṇābhimatam dehīti yācannahaṁ
tasmai prāñjalirasmi dāśarathaye śrījānakījānaye|| [62]

Sītāpatistava

This *Stotra* contains 8 verses composed in the metre *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*. It describes the story of *Rāmāyaṇa*. Like the *Viśvagarbhastava* the last *pāda* of this *Stotra* also contains the line as *Smṛtṛtrāraparāyaras sa bhagavān sītāpatir me gatiḥ*:

Śrīrāmaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ ravikule jāto dhareśātmajo
Līlātāḍitatāḍakaḥ munimakhatrātāpyahalyāghahṛt |
Gaurīkāntaśarāsabhidvasumatīputrīmanoraṅjakaḥ
Smrtṛtrāṛaparāyaras sa bhagavān sītāpatirme gatiḥ || [63]

This work also does not contain any colophon.

Rāmāyaṇasaṅgrahaḥ

The whole work is composed in the metre *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*. Although the verses here do not contain any heading, they appear to be an epitome of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In all, the work contains 309 verses which are arranged as *Bālakāṇḍa*-40 verses, *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*-50 verses,

62. *Ibid.*, 114.
63. *Sītāpatistava* I.

Araṇyakāṇḍa-35 verses, *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*-48 verses, *Sundarakāṇḍa*-36 verses and *Yuddhakāṇḍa*-100 verses.

Oṁkārapratipādakaṁ parataraṁ vyāptaṁ ca sarveṣu yal-
Lokānāmudayasthitipralayakṛtkālapramāṇātigam |
Rakṣastomanibarhaṇārthamavanau tadrāmabhadrātmanā
Krīdannityasukhasvarūpamatulaṁ syādbhuyase śreyase || [64]
Pratardevamahīsurarṣividuṣaḥ saṁsevāmanaśśuciḥ
Maddhyāne sacivaiścaran hitatamaiḥ rājyakriyāsaṁhatim|
Vaidehyā sahito niśaṁ ratiparo nityaṁ nayan tvaṁ prabho
Gopāyan prakṛtīśśaśāsitha bhuvaṁ varṣān krameṇāyutān || [65]

This work also does not contain any colophon.

Śrīrāmāyaṇastotra

This work contains 21 verses composed in the metre *Sragdharā*. The story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been narrated addressing it to Rāma. Hence all the verses are like the *Pratyakṣarca* and they have the verb in the second person. The copy is full of mistakes.

So'yaṁ martyāvatārastava khalu niyataṁ martyaśikṣārthamevaṁ
Viśleṣārtinirāgastyajanamapi bhavetkāmadharmopadeṣṭuḥ |
Nocet svātmānubhūtaiḥ kva nu tava manaso vikṛyā ca kṛpāṇe
Sa tvaṁ sattvaikamūrte makhilabhuvanapate vyādhunu vyādhijālam|| [66]

This also lacks a colophon.

Besides his above mentioned works, another work namely *Rāmācaryāstava* is also ascribed to Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita. Prof. S.B. Varnekar has attributed this work to Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita in his work known as *Saṁskṛtavāṅmayakośa*. [67]

64. *Rāmāyaṇasaṅgrahaḥ* 1.
65. *Ibid.*, 309.
66. *Śrīrāmāyaṇastotra*, 21.
67. *Saṁskṛtavāṅmayakośa*, part I, p. 252.